

SPOTLIGHT ON JANET CURRIE:

Growing Hemp and Growing a Business

VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Janet Currie, owner of Valley Stock Farms, started growing hemp for its Cannabidiols (CBD) when industrial hemp became legal to grow in 2019. With her crop meeting the standards of Vermont’s Hemp Program, she successfully secured buyers for all 3,200 of the plants she had grown on her farm in Orwell, Vermont. She dried the plants in her barn, milled and bagged them and sold them in twenty-five 250 lb bags.

Other hemp growers in Vermont have not been so successful at securing buyers over the past two years, resulting in waning enthusiasm for growing hemp. In 2021, Vermont had 336 registered growers; in 2022, it was 89 (as of July 20, 2022). A



Janet Currie, Valley Stock Farms and Travis Samuels, co-owner of Zion Growers, pleased with how the crop has turned out, given how little rain Rutland County received this growing season.

drop of 74%. Janet describing this hemp boom and bust, said, “People did so many crazy things that first year –for instance using a combine when the

hemp was wet and macerating it and then wrapping it. They ended up with a moldy smelly mess. Hemp processing failed miserably, and farmers lost their shirts.”

With a degree in genetics, Janet has put her science and quantitative skillset to use. As she told me, “I did a lot of research. I didn’t grow as much myself that year.” Janet’s advice is still “Grow what you can sufficiently dry.” I asked Janet how she found her buyers and started her business. Janet said, “When I was calling people to buy my biomass, I contacted agricultural agencies in other states to get information on their hemp growers, processors, and other brokers who represented the processors.”

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AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

Vermont businesses had a fantastic year at the region's biggest fair: The Big E.

The atmosphere felt like the old days before the pandemic. Vendors were telling their stories to visitors. The 17-day event invited visitors from New England and beyond to come experience a taste of our region's businesses, food, agriculture, and products. The Vermont Building once again hosted many great businesses from the Green Mountain State, providing a wonderful, historic venue for a great year. Here are a few highlights. And those visitors were buying a "Taste of Vermont." Preliminary sales for the 2022 Big E which ended on Sunday October 2 totaled \$1.7 million dollars.

Some notable items from the fair:

- **All-time Big-E single day attendance record (177,789)** was hit on

Vermont Day (September 24).

- **The #1 new food to try at the Big E this year:** Nomadic Kitchen Confections' S'mores Macaron recommended by MassLive.
- **Logan George, Maintenance and Services staff for the Vermont Building, received the Big E "Host of the Day" award** on Wednesday, September 28. This award recognizes one employee, volunteer, and other member of The Big E family each day during the fair who goes "above and beyond" to make the fair a positive experience for everyone involved.

Total attendance at the Big E this year reached 1,603,354 million visitors, second only to 2019. Twenty-three Vermont vendors welcomed those who visited the Vermont Building. Harvest New England Day on September 30th increased that number to 33.

We are grateful for the commitment to all those who spend so much time promoting Vermont over the 17 days.

Governor Phill Scott once again was able to spend time on the fairgrounds and talking with the vendors about their needs. He told us "I want to extend my appreciation

to all the Vermont companies that promote the Green Mountain State at the Big E. Your commitment to this 17-day fair is impressive and important as we grow our economy. When I visited on Vermont Day, it was clear those visiting the building were enjoying all that Vermont was serving up. Congratulations on another successful fair on the avenue of states."

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets takes pride in managing the Vermont building with support from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Building and General Services, The Vermont State Police and the Vermont Department of Labor. Our team of Faith Raymond, Trevor Lowell, Kristen Brassard and Laura Ginsburg are honored to be a part of this effort.

The complete list of vendors at the Vermont Building this year include: The Skinny Pancake, Better Wheel Workshops, Eden

Specialty Ciders, Halladay's Harvest Barn, J&P Bonita Enterprises, Ben & Jerry's, Mother Myrick's Confectionery, Vermont Clothing Company, Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association, The Village Peddler, FinAllie Ferments, Green Mountain Concessions, Bergamot + Amor, Hilaryannlove Studio, Sugar Bob's Finest Kind, Teen Challenge Vermont, Treeline, Willow Bend Publishing, Nomadic Kitchen, KIS Kombucha, Bear's Den Carving, Danforth Pewter, and the Long Trail Brewing Company.

The ten additional Harvest Day vendors include: Myer's Bagels, Shrubbly, Wild Vermont Soaps, Northeast Kingdom Hemp, Bear Tree Sugarworks, Gracie's Bees, Fern Bridge Farm, Valley Clayplain Forest Farm, Prints by Z, and the Vermont Farm Bureau.

Thanks to all. We look forward to an exciting Big E Fair in 2023 but for now everyone is catching their breath as we march toward winter.

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ANSON TEBBETTS, Secretary
Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

TERRY SMITH
Editor

FAITH RAYMOND, Managing Editor

SCOTT WATERMAN, Contributing Editor

Advertising and subscriptions:

E-mail: agr.agriview@vermont.gov

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This Month's Recipe

Turkey, Spinach & Stuffing Casserole

When you want more Thanksgiving, but the leftovers are gone. About 4 servings.

Ingredients

1 can (14.5 ounces) chicken broth
3 TBSP butter
3 cups stuffing mix
3 cups cubed cooked turkey
2 cups fresh baby spinach
1/2 cup dried cranberries
3/4 cup shredded VT cheddar cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 350. In a large saucepan, bring broth and butter to a boil. Remove from heat. Add stuffing mix, stirring until moistened.

Stir in turkey, spinach, and cranberries.

Put the mixture into a greased 11" x 7" baking dish. Sprinkle the cheese across the mixture.

Bake uncovered for 10-15 minutes or until the cheese is melted.



Guidance About Farming and the Vermont Cannabis Market

From the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

1. Is cannabis (marijuana) legal in Vermont?

The short answer is “yes” under state law, but “no” under federal law (and federal law is supreme).

Under state law, cannabis is legal in Vermont for those who comply with state law and the Cannabis Control Board’s (CCB) regulations.

Under federal law, cannabis is a Schedule I controlled substance, so using, possessing, growing, selling, and/or distributing cannabis is a federal crime. Federal law enjoys “supremacy” over state law in this context, so federal law controls and Vermont law has no impact on the federal prohibition.

Our federal and state governments are separate “sovereigns” with distinct powers, so each government generally enforces its own laws. In Vermont, state authorities will not bring any cannabis related criminal or civil actions against citizens who comply with state law, but the federal government has the authority to prosecute criminal offenses and/or seek civil remedies for violations of federal law.

2. The direct conflict between federal and state cannabis laws creates challenges and uncertainty for farmers interested in joining the market.

Vermont’s enactment of Act 164 and the CCB’s subsequent roll out of the adult use cannabis market provides opportunities to enter the state authorized cannabis industry. However, given the federal prohibition, there is no guaranteed safe path for using, possessing,

growing, or selling cannabis. Although approximately thirty-nine states now allow some form of cannabis use (about half exclusively allow medical marijuana), Congress has not decriminalized cannabis—even in those states that regulate and allow it.

Although cannabis remains a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law, the federal government—including the United States Department of Justice—has been reluctant to prosecute criminal marijuana offenses in states that permit and regulate cannabis when the participants comply with state requirements.

While we cannot offer any assurances about how the federal government may choose to address federal legal violations, criminal prosecution and/or related asset forfeiture do not appear to be the most likely risks associated with cultivating and/or selling cannabis in compliance with state law.

To date, the federal government has generally elected to not bring related criminal charges, but it will not support criminal activity with federal services, funds, or programs, so there may be substantial collateral consequences to growing and/or distributing cannabis.

3. The potential implications for farmers considering the cannabis marketplace are broad.

We do not attempt to address every potential collateral consequence of violating federal law by growing or distributing cannabis, but highlight some of the risks you should evaluate before participating in Vermont’s cannabis market.

If you grow cannabis, you may expect these potentially significant

consequences:

- Ineligibility for federal programs, technical assistance, and/or benefits;
- Ineligibility for federal grants and/or state grant programs that utilize any federal money (like the recent CRF COVID relief grants), including programs the state provides in whole or in part;
- Ineligibility for federally funded conservation easements;
- Federal officials may be unwilling to enter or inspect your land to even evaluate whether you may be eligible for federal programs or aid; and/or
- Ineligibility for state services, programs, grants, or other funds because the state receives related federal assistance. In addition, Vermont farmers who are considering entering the cannabis market should evaluate other potential implications, including but not limited to the following issues:
- Cannabis may not be grown, stored, or handled on federally funded conservation easement land, including leased or purchased conserved farmland;
- Farmland may not be enrolled in a federally funded farmland conservation program if a farmer cultivates cannabis, even on a distinct parcel not being evaluated for conservation;
- You may be ineligible for federal crop insurance for all crops;
- You may be ineligible for all AAFM administered financial water quality assistance programs (including BMP, CREP, EQIP) and technical assistance;
- You may be ineligible for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Management Assistance programs (high tunnel and irrigation financial assistance);
- You may lose access to migrant labor through the H2-A program;
- You may risk access to federally backed loans or mortgages;
- You may have difficulty securing banking services because of federal money laundering prohibitions;
- You may not be able to deduct your business expenses from your federal income taxes because businesses that are considered criminal enterprises are required to pay taxes but may not deduct expenses;
- You may be ineligible for federal bankruptcy protections;
- Immigrant workers may face deportation for drug offenses; and/or
- Federal grant recipients are subject to the Drug Free Workplace Act, which prohibits drugs (including cannabis) in the workplace.

The key takeaway is that using, possessing, growing, and/or distributing marijuana is still a federal crime. Because of that fundamental conflict between state and federal law, there may be serious collateral consequences to producing cannabis in Vermont.

There is no entirely legal path to producing cannabis in Vermont, but there are important factors to consider, and you may be able to substantially minimize your exposure or potential risks. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets **cannot** provide legal advice to anyone who is considering producing cannabis, but we **strongly** encourage all farmers to carefully consult with a private attorney when evaluating whether to enter the cannabis market and/or how to operate within it.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Awarded \$500,000 to Increase Local Food Access

USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance connects local farmers to underserved communities

By Julia Scheier, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will launch a significant program to purchase local food and support the most vulnerable. Earlier this summer the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced it signed a cooperative agreement with Vermont under the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA). Through LFPA, the Agency has connected with local partners to purchase and distribute locally grown, produced, and processed food from underserved producers.

"These important investments in our farmers and producers will help grow Vermont's economy while protecting our most vulnerable," said Anson Tebbetts, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture. "This innovative approach to feeding those in need will provide healthy food while supporting those who make their living off the land."

Five projects with nonprofit partners will begin this fall:

- **Abenaki Helping Abenaki:** \$50,000 to purchase culturally appropriate food for distribution via partner
- **Capstone Community Action:** \$20,000 to purchase local food for use in Community Kitchen Academy training program and associated distribution sites as well as their food shelf.
- **Center for an Agricultural Economy:** \$50,000 to expand Produce to Pantry offerings that supplies food pantries with fresh, local food.
- **The Intervale Center:** \$72,000 to expand offerings, especially of culturally appropriate produce, at pop-up farmers markets in historically underserved neighborhoods.
- **The Vermont Foodbank:** \$61,765 to partner



food pantries and distribution sites across the state. Funding will also support increased staffing at one food pantry to expand open hours.

with a New American chicken farmer and local slaughterhouse to offer halal chicken to be distributed to New Americans throughout the state. This project will also purchase and distribute African corn varieties.

In addition, the Vermont Land Trust and Feeding Chittenden are partnering to expand the purchase and distribution of goat meat to the refugee and New American communities.

These partner organizations will use the Local Food Purchase Assistance funds to expand procurement relationships with local and underserved farmers and producers and distribute the food purchased to underserved communities. These projects will run for 18 months and vary in size and scope but all aim to increase access to

local, culturally appropriate food products and support diverse farmers and food producers.

As part of this program, the Agency will release a request for applications (RFA) this fall to solicit other organizations and individual farms to participate in this initiative. Funds will be awarded to farms and organizations that demonstrate an ability to purchase and distribute local food from socially disadvantaged producers to underserved community members across Vermont.

"This opportunity will allow us to purchase food from local farmers and work with food access organizations to distribute healthy, nutritious foods to underserved communities. These investments will create new market opportunities for our agricultural producers and ensure underserved populations experience increased food security during this critical time" stated Abbey Willard, the Agency's Director of Agriculture Development.

"USDA is excited to partner with Vermont to promote economic opportunities for farmers and producers and to increase access to locally sourced, fresh, healthy, and nutritious food in underserved communities," said USDA Under

Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt.

"The Local Food Purchase Cooperative Agreement Program will improve food and agricultural supply-chain resiliency and increase local food consumption around the country."

The LFPA program is authorized by the American Rescue Plan to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency. Through this program, USDA will award up to \$400 million through non-competitive cooperative agreements with state and tribal governments to support local, regional, and underserved producers through the purchase of food produced within the state or within 400 miles of delivery destination.

- More information about the program is available on AMS's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program webpage.
- More information about the Vermont LFPA program and upcoming RFA is available on the Agency's website.

For questions about Vermont's LFPA program, contact Julia Scheier by email julia.scheier@vermont.gov or by phone 802-522-7042.

Still Eligible for EQIP This Farm Bill?

Don't Miss the November 18 EQIP Deadline

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) is a grant program that provides funding and expert advice to farmers and forest managers to address natural resource concerns. First authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill, EQIP has been reauthorized and allocated additional funding in every Farm Bill since. Each farm in the United States is entitled to apply for a maximum of \$450,000 from EQIP each Farm Bill, which are drafted every five years.

Conservation practices supported under EQIP range widely from in-field, edge-of-field, and forest practices all the way to production area construction projects. Many farms bundle together diverse practices under EQIP contracts. For example, EQIP might provide engineering assistance and funding to support the installation of practice infrastructure, and then provide funds and agronomic assistance to support rotational grazing and hedgerow planting.

Installing bigger construction projects, such as whole-farmyard waste storage and manure application systems, is one of the most effective ways for farms to decrease nutrient runoff and is also often a



New waste storage infrastructure can be costly. If farms think ahead and break up their projects across multiple Farm Bills, they can maximize the federal and state assistance they are eligible for.

necessary investment to keep up with state and federal water quality regulations. However, these projects can run at a really high cost and many farms have felt that the \$450,000 cap is limiting their ability to support these useful but not particularly profitable improvements.

Some of these farms come to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (AAFM) for the Best Management Practice (BMP) program to help make up the difference between the cost of large construction projects and the amount that EQIP can fund. That extra assistance can really help construction projects be more accessible, but the BMP program is itself capped at \$200,000 or the farm's EQIP grant amount, whichever is lower. For the

largest of projects, that still may not be enough.

So, what can farms do when project costs are high and grant funds are limited by the Farm Bill? According to AAFM engineer Rob Achilles, the answer is to break the project up into smaller parts and to plan ahead to spread project investments over multiple Farm Bills.

"Some farms in Vermont, the most proactive farms, are maxing out EQIP with every Farm Bill and chipping away at those bigger projects," Rob shared. "That's the way to do it. If you keep ahead of your need for more manure storage, and keep ahead of the regulations, you don't need to make that investment all at once – you can spread it out and maximize the contribution

you can get from NRCS and the State."

Now, Rob points out, is a great time to think ahead to start spreading out costs on large-scale construction projects. The EQIP deadline on November 18th of this year represents the last year of funding under the 2018 Farm Bill but can support projects over the next 1-5 years. After that deadline has passed, future EQIP funding pools will be supported by the 2023 Farm Bill, meaning

that the \$450,000 cap will reset. So hypothetically if you successfully applied now for \$450,000 towards part of a project and applied in 2024 or 2025 for \$450,000 towards another part of the same project, you could end up with \$900,000 towards that project as a whole, which would make a big difference in getting that conservation on the ground.

If you have major conservation needs on your farm and haven't yet maxed out EQIP, "don't leave that free money on the table," Rob advised. Apply to EQIP before November 18th, 2022 to be considered for this last year of funds through the 2018 Farm Bill, before your \$450,000 cap resets next year.

To apply to EQIP or to understand where you stand in proximity to your current cap limit, contact your local USDA NRCS service center (found at <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>). For more information on the state BMP program, to apply, or for advice from an engineer, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp>



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Value-Added Dairy Producers Invited to Attend SIAL Canada

By Kim Burns, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is recruiting cheesemakers and producers of other specialty dairy products to represent their products at SIAL Canada. As part of a regional value-added dairy pavilion hosted by the NE-DBIC, businesses will benefit from a suite of services and subsidized booth space. Dairy businesses that are currently exporting or are export-ready are encouraged

to reach out.

SIAL is Canada's largest international food and beverage trade show hosted in Toronto from May 9th to May 11th, 2023. It includes a complete range of food products from international producers under one roof which allows buyers to discover the industry's latest trends and innovations while increasing domestic and international audiences for exhibitors. There will be over 1,200 national and international exhibitors from 50 countries and over 25,000 buyers from all over

the world.

By participating in the NE-DBIC pavilion, participants will be provided with a turn-key pavilion booth space, 1:1

complimentary coaching, guidance on show logistics, and assistance in navigating financial assistance programs.

To inquire about participating in this opportunity,

visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/sial-canada-pavilion or contact Laura Ginsburg by email Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov or by phone 802-522-2252.

Interested in Heading to Trade Shows in 2023?

As you make your 2023 trade show plans for your food or beverage business (dairy or otherwise!), be sure to check out these sources of funding to help you get there:

- **Food Export Northeast's Branded Program** provides financial assistance through Food Export Northeast's Branded Program, which can provide 50% reimbursement to businesses attending domestic and international tradeshows. Eligible expenses for reimbursement through Food Export Northeast may include hotel, air transportation, printing, design fees, shipping fees, and more. Learn more and apply now to secure funds for 2023! Visit: <https://www.foodexport.org/our-programs/market-promotion/branded-program>
- **Trade Show Assistance Grants** provide Vermont agriculture and forestry businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual trade shows that target out-of-state buyers. Businesses may request 50% reimbursement for eligible trade show expenses, up to \$5,000. The application will open later this year. To learn more, visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshow

Peer Network Grows to Help Manage Farmer Stress

By Andrea Grayson, Farm First

As everyone knows, the stresses of being a farmer are many, from weather to equipment to regulations to family...and no one knows what you're going through like another farmer.

That's why Farm First, Vermont's resource for helping farmers manage stress, is expanding its programming to include a network of

trained Farmer Peers. Farmer Peers come from all over the state and do all manner of farming. They are trained to know about resources that help stressed-out farmers. This includes help coping with financial, legal, family, mental health and physical ailments that may pose a barrier to a successful farm operation.

Farmer Peers are big-hearted people who have been through a lot and want to support their peers in

growing their resilience.

We are looking for farmers who want to be trained to become peers. Farmers are paid for the training time.

The six training sessions begin Thursday, November 10th. To learn more about the network and to apply to be a peer, please visit <https://farmfirst.org/peer-support>, or contact Andrea Grayson by email at andyg@investeap.org or by phone 802-277-7729.

Organic Certification Cost Share Application Deadline Extended to December 15, 2022

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets offers funding assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to organic producers and handlers of agricultural products who have received organic certification through a USDA accredited certifying agent.

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees to become newly certified or re-certified for specific scopes under the National Organic Program are eligible for cost-share reimbursement.

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement of up to 50% of their direct certification costs paid between October 1 and

September 30 annually, not to exceed \$500 per certification scope. There are up to four eligible certification scopes (crops, livestock, wild crops, and handling), which must be individually inspected for organic certification to be eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Costs include application fees, inspection

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Thanksgiving Dinner Preps Can Include a Local Vermont Turkey

By Scott Waterman, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

As the days grow shorter and we head towards the holidays, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN) wish to remind those planning for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner that Vermont's local turkey farms are ready to help. The time to order your local bird is now!

Vermont is home to more than a dozen turkey farms across the state, raising and producing local turkeys ready just in time for Thanksgiving and the holiday season. According to the National



Turkey Federation, nearly 88 percent of Americans eat turkey at Thanksgiving. The average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving is 16 pounds, meaning that approximately 736 million pounds of turkey were con-

sumed in the United States during Thanksgiving in 2016. In Vermont, nearly 48,000 turkeys and chickens were produced in 2016.

To help locate your dream bird, check out Vermont Fresh Network's

Local Turkey Finder.

"A local turkey brings great joy to family and friends during the holidays. Vermont is lucky to have so many local food producers that provide a fresh bird and fresh ingredients each fall for the dinner table," said

Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts. "We are thankful for all the farmers who feed us."

The Vermont Fresh Network can help connect you to a local farm and farmer near you, for a fresh

Thanksgiving feast for your family. You can also find farm fresh dinner ingredients for your turkey dinner at the same time.

"Thanksgiving is a time for us to celebrate with our family, our friends, and our farmers. A locally grown turkey and locally sourced Thanksgiving dinner offers the freshest ingredients for a truly delicious meal," said Tara Pereira, Executive Director of the Vermont Fresh Network, "And food grown in Vermont pairs perfectly with our local wine and cider."

Along with local turkey and produce, the Vermont Fresh Network can connect you with a local wine and cider pairing guide and a list of Vermont Thanksgiving-week farmers markets by visiting DigInVT.com - an interactive website for agricultural and culinary events and experiences in Vermont.

Conservation Districts Seek Supervisors and Associate Supervisors

Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRCs) are units of local government that were established by local landowners after the 1939 Soil Conservation Act. NRCs have served their communities for decades, guiding local conservation efforts, securing funding for local projects, and advocating for local concerns to state and national agencies. Today, NRCs are the boots on the ground for implementing state and national efforts to protect water quality and soil health and combat climate change.

Each NRC is run by a board of supervisors. Supervisors are elected for a term of five years and supported by a District Manager and volunteer associate supervisors. Supervisors live in their district; provide direction, leadership, and guidance to the District Manager; and bring valuable local perspective to the natural resources conservation planning process. With strong ties to their community and a range of expertise from farming to forestry and more, supervisors are the most important

asset in guiding the direction of their Natural Resources Conservation District.

Anyone interested in running for the office of supervisor must reside within the boundaries of their local district. To have your name placed on an upcoming election ballot for the office of supervisor, a person must have a minimum of twenty-five (25) signatures from local landowners on nominating petitions. Supervisor terms typically begin in January.

In addition, NRCs welcome the inclusion of associate supervisors, non-voting members appointed by the Board, who may have an interest in the general activities of their NRC or a specific area of interest or expertise to share.

Interested? To find out more about how to get involved and the timeline of this year's elections, please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation District: <https://www.vacd.org/contact-nrcds>

Certified Organic Cost Share Application

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fees, USDA organic certification costs, user fees/sale assessments, and postage.

To learn more and apply, please visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organic-costshare

The application deadline has been extended to December 15, 2022. Reimbursement is available on a first come, first served basis. Contact Terry Smith at terry.smith@vermont.gov or 802-828-5667.

Four Barns Receive Fresh Glow with Vermont Barn Painting Program in 2022

Pandemic creates backlog of applicants. New applications accepted in Fall of 2023.

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and Tracy Verge, VT Department of Labor

Four Vermont barns received a new coat of paint this summer with the Vermont Barn Painting Program run by the Vermont Department of Labor and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Due to the pandemic, efforts to paint barns have been slowed and the program continues the work to move through its current list of applicants. Applications are currently CLOSED to address this backlog of barns, but we anticipate the applications to reopen on September 1, 2023, for a period of one month, and close again on October 1, 2023.

Sunshine Valley Farm Pittsfield, VT

The Sunshine Valley farm in Pittsfield, VT is a working farm that grows lavender and other herbs. In May-June of 2022, a painting crew comprised of seven Youth from ReSOURCE's Burlington



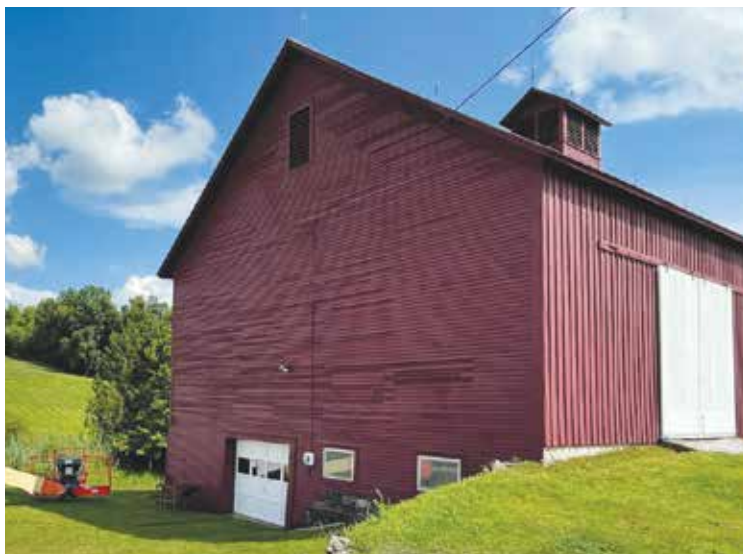
Sunshine Valley Farm



YouthBuild program and two youth from the Rutland area painted the Paulding's barn and garage. With the generosity of the Paulding family, the crew also was fortunate to camp on the farm for the duration of the project. Thus, in addition to learning painting and job site safety skills, youth crew members were also able to gain valuable life skills such as cooking and communal living.

Paulding Farm, Rutland, VT

The Paulding farm in Rutland, VT (historically the Hawley Farm) is a working farm that raises beef cattle and grows hay and timber. In August 2022, a crew comprised of two Youth from ReSOURCE's Burlington



Paulding Farm

YouthBuild program and two youth from the Rutland area painted the Skwira barn. In addition, the crew hosted a volunteer day in which seven AmeriCorps volunteers from ReSOURCE's Everybody Works program helped to paint trim and doors at the end of the project.

Hardwick Center Farm, Hardwick, VT

A crew of seven youth from the surrounding communities worked together to restore the beauty of this barn. The crew developed valuable skills that would make them more employable. They also enhanced their team building skills as they worked to complete the barn. Two of the crew members returned to high school and three of the crew members went onto college

Hollister Hill Farm, Marshfield VT

Two of the Hardwick Center crew members continued onto the next



Hardwick Center Farm

barn at Hollister Hill Farm in Marshfield and are currently working to complete that project. This property is a bed and breakfast with structures dating back to 1820 continuing to support a

working farm today.

For information about the Vermont Barn Painting Program, please visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vermont-barn-painting> or contact

Scott Waterman at scott.waterman@vermont.com or 802-622-4662.



Hollister Hill Farm before (left) and after (below).





GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT:

Ploughgate Creamery Innovatively Connects to Customers

By Kim Burns, Vermont
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Covid-19 pandemic posed supply chain challenges to value-added dairy producers, but an unexpected anomaly emerged from the unprecedented healthcare crisis: the butter boom. Sales skyrocketed for the spreadable staple in 2020. The increased demand for butter exposed both a soft spot and an opportunity for Ploughgate Creamery of Fayston, Vermont. This small Vermont business was able to meet this demand for their existing product line with the help of a Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC).

Ploughgate Creamery has a crew of five butter production personnel and manufactures 700 - 1,000 pounds of cultured butter a week. The company was founded on a passion of reviving butter-making tradition that drew upon founder Marisa Mauro's background in farming and cheese/butter product development. Mauro identified a need to strategize as the supply of cream plateaued and the demand for butter increased.

The NE-DBIC grant awarded Ploughgate Creamery \$24,800 to create a digital marketing strategy



photo courtesy of Ali Kaukas

and overhaul its website. The project sought to increase profit margins and to ensure the financial success of the business in the long term. Through the grant, they

contracted Pivot Marketing, a digital marketing agency to convert its website to a more e-commerce friendly platform. This allowed Ploughgate to moderate

website traffic and maximize sales. Pivot Marketing also completed a Search Engine Optimization Audit which is a process that analyzes the website's presence on search platforms, such as Google.

Ploughgate Creamery also contracted web designer and graphic designer Andrew Dernavich to develop the necessary marketing materials to drive web traffic, engage customers, and improve the quality of the products that are shipped. He also helped create a branded and recyclable shipping box. Local artist, Caitlin Hirshberg, did informative drawings and watercolor paintings that suggested creative ways to use the butter.

According to Mauro,

Ploughgate has exceeded their marketing and branding goals. In 2020 Ploughgate Creamery had \$17,600 in online sales. In 2022, with the help of the grant, Ploughgate Creamery had \$40,000 in online sales.

Mauro noted that the grant helped her feel more connected to staff, customers, and the outside world during the isolating pandemic. When discussing the benefit of the NE-DBIC Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant, Mauro said, "I feel lucky to be a small business owner in Vermont."

Check out Ploughgate Creamery's new and improved website at ploughgate.com.

Open for Applications: Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is accepting applications for the Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant. This grant offers support to dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to improve the safety of dairy products.

Awards will range from \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% required match commitment. Applications are due on January 19th, 2023.

For more information, visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/dairy-food-safety-certification-grant or contact Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov or 802-498-5111.

Coming Soon: Dairy Farm Innovation Grant

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is excited to announce the Dairy Farm Innovation Grant. This project will fund projects across farm production and business operations that support community- and climate-forward production. This grant will take a whole farm system approach and will prioritize collaboration with other dairy stakeholders.

This grant will range from \$10,000 to \$75,000 with a 25% match commitment required. The request for applications is currently available. The application period will be from November 17th, 2022 to February 2nd, 2023.

For more information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/dairy-farm-innovation-grant or contact Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov or 802-585-4571.

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
802-257-7967 ext. 303, or
vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(E. Wallingford) Great blueberry season despite the dry summer. Finished picking Elliot on 9/17. It's a great late berry. Ordered 200 more blueberry plants for spring 2023. Pumpkins have good size, some still green. Finished marking out peach orchard for 2023 planting of 100 trees, trying four cold hardy varieties. First frost was 9/29.

(Westminster) We're having a good fall so far, with a near-record squash crop in good condition, while our biggest customer is buying more squash than usual. Most root crops look good and we're harvesting beets, carrots, radishes, and parsnips. The warm weather in the last few months has pushed our lettuce so it will be finished sooner than usual. We may send some of the Jamaican workers home early.

For the last two years, we've rented an Esch seeder for multi-seeding cover crops from Cheshire County Conservation District. It's doing a very good job covering a large area quickly, seeding vetch/rye, clover/

rye and sprinkling in tillage radish.

(Guildhall) Despite several nights in the low 30s we've yet to get a frost thanks to ill-timed river fog. So about 30 of our 48 acres of potatoes are very much alive, and in fact looking great. We'd intended to spray vinegar, a little organic herbicide trial, but the never ceasing rain has nixed that idea, and then we winterized the spray-coups in a rush.

We'll start harvesting on 10/10 regardless of the crop conditions, but we're forecasted for lows in the mid 20s early this week and hopefully it'll be clear. We dug a truck of fresh spuds last week, for an order that couldn't wait, and it went well enough, but it's certainly a good reminder how poorly an old grimme handles long green vines.

Pumpkins were slow to color up but we're shipping heavy now.

New England Fruit And Vegetable Conference

The NEFVC returns to in-person format on December 13-15, 2022, in Manchester, NH. Registration information coming soon at <https://newenglandvfc.org/>

On-Line Tool For Selecting Cover Crops

The Cover Crop Decision Support Tool is an online tool designed to support farm decision-making around cover crops. The tool includes a Cover Crop Explorer that provides in-depth information on more than 35 cover crop species. It also has a Species Selector that assists users in selecting individual cover crops based on plant

hardiness zones, field soil and growing conditions, and cover cropping goals. The tool is available at no cost at: <http://covercrop.tools/>

Produce Safety And Packshed Information Resources

Check out the SCRUB (Sanitizing and Cleaning Resources for Your Business) project information – over 50 resources on everything from bubblers, coolers, drains, floors, and handwash stations, to rats and rodents! See <https://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/scrub-project-resources/>. Categories include Produce Safety Planning, Water, Hygienic & Sanitary

Design, Standard Operating Procedures, Training, Culture & Case Studies.

VVBGA Annual Meeting January 24 In Montpelier

Our first in-person gathering in several years will be at the Capital Plaza Hotel. Commercial VVBGA members can reserve exhibit tables, and/or become a meeting sponsor, visit <https://vvbga.org/commercial-membership>

Exhibit At The VT Flower Show

The VT Flower Show will take place March 3-5, 2023, at the Champlain Valley Expo in Essex Junction. Over

35 educational seminars will be offered, and 100 vendors will have exhibits related to horticultural/gardening, including landscape designers and architects, nurseries, florists, greenhouses, growers, garden centers, garden/home accessories and other floral/green industry/allied trade related businesses. Learn more at <https://vnlavt.org/vermont-flower-show/exhibitors/>

Vermont Nursery And Landscape Association Winter Meeting

February 16, 2023, at the UVM Davis Center in Burlington, VT. Details forthcoming.

Helping Wild Bumblebee Queens Overwinter

By Laura Johnson,
UVM Extension

Wild bees are important pollinators for our crops, gardens and wild plants. In Vermont there are over 350 types of wild bees, including 17 different species of bumblebees.

Bumblebees are efficient pollinators that are especially important for spring crops, such as early blooming berries and tree fruits. But by late fall, a colony that may range in size from 50-500 bees will have all died except for a single new queen.

As with all bees, the queens depend on pollen, nectar, clean water and safe nesting sites for survival, all of which are limited resources in our managed landscapes. In addition, there is strong competition among species for these resources.

Queen bees will be one of the first visitors of spring crops, hungry after a long winter. To help them survive the winter, here are some things you can do.

Leave blooms standing until the first hard frost. To gain enough body mass for winter survival, bees require a lot of pollen and nectar. Leaving plants up far into the fall, ideally until they are killed by frost, provides a good source of both.

Established rodent burrows are known nesting sites for bumblebees. Maybe all those voles tunneling through your landscape have a saving grace?

Consider reduced mowing and avoid cutting back ornamental bunch grasses. Don't rake up fallen leaves, and skip the winter brush pile burn party. All these provide great rodent burrow materials and locations where

bumblebee queens can nest during winter months.

Man-made structures can also become wild habitat. Whether it's your 1800s stone wall reminiscent of New England sheep farming, an old foundation or your new \$30,000 retaining wall, each provides protective cracks and crevices where bumblebees can find shelter.

Consider conserving historical structures on your land. Or cultivate new habitat by taking rocks picked from your property to make a rock pile where bumblebee queens can nest as they enter diapause, a state of dormancy, for the winter.

Offering pollen, nectar and water sources late into the fall and abundant and diverse undisturbed shelters for nests will help ensure a queen's survival and early season pollination services next spring.

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Ag.griview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Beef cow (approx. 1,300 lb, 3 y/o, open) + calf. Angus x Hereford. Calm, halter broken, fence trained. \$2,000 obo. 802-258-7088 (10)

4 year old angus bull for sale and 6-7 month old steers and heifers for sale. 802-558-8196 (10)

Two Jersey heifers for sale. Both bottle fed and halter trained. "Charlotte" #68876, born June 29, 2021, sire - "Reckless" "Butterscotch" - #68960, born in early July 2021, sire - "Whistler" \$1000 each Email - greatbrooknursery@gmail.com, or call 802-454-1856. (10)

Equipment

13 ft roller. John Deere 39 3pt hitch mower. 10 ton grain bin. 802-624-0143 (7)

New Idea 5209 disc mower, Fahr Tedder (4 rotor) KH 500, JD 894 rake and M-F 120 baler. Baler is fresh out of dealer, small bales, good knotters. All together for \$13,000.00. 802-316-7815 (8)

Delaval 1250 gal Bulk Tank. Patz Gutter Cleaner- Counter Clockwise, approximately

350 ft of chain. 7630 John Deere Tractor New in 2007 – 3500 hrs. IVT Transmission – Economy PTO Active Seat – Suspended Front End. AX10BIB Tires – Rear View Camera. 835 John Deere MoCo Mower – Center Pivot New in 2008 – 1000 RPM PTO 11' 6" Cutting Swath. Anderson Bale Wrapper New in 2014 Model RB680 – Honda Engine Hand Held Remote Control. Meyers VB440 Vertical Beater Manure Spreader New in 2018 Call 802-563-2332 or email hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com (9)

16 ft New Holland elevator . 38ft John Deere hay elevator. 6.8 ton grain bin. 3pt fertilizer spreader. 802-624-0143 (11)

Tri- axle equipment hauling trailer with pintel hitch. Steel body 8' by 16' with steel frame and treated wood deck. Some rust in frame . Registered in Vt until 9/23. Good rubber. spare tire, pickup pintel hitch, ramps included. \$950 obo. Call or text 802-291-4525 (11)

Equine

Travis sled made from ash with

4' runners. Ready to use in good condition. Kept under cover. Needs pole. \$500 obo. Travis sled with 40" runners. Good condition ready to use. Kept under cover. Needs pole. \$350 obo. Amish built oak horse shoeing stocks in good condition. . \$200 obo. Pioneer built large hay wagon with hydraulic brakes Sled runners for winter use. Body built for hauling hay or wagon rides. \$500 obo. Call or text 802-291-4525 (11)

General

14 acre fertilized field for contract use. Located at 23 School St. in N. Springfield, Vt. Land is high and dry. Call Karl 802-886-1473 (8)

Hay, Feed & Forage

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. Call 802-446-2791(10)

4 X 4 wrapped baleage, good quality. Certified organic. Fair prices. Call Phil at 802-254-6982 (3)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (3)

ADDISON COUNTY

June 1 cut 4 x 5 round bales for sale \$45 a bale. Approximately 1000 ton of corn silage \$58 per ton. call 802-989-0793 (5)

4 x 5 2nd cup round bales for sale \$50 A bale. 4 x 5 straw bales for sale \$60 a bale call 802-989-0793. (5)

CALEDONIA COUNTY

2022 Square Bales \$4.50 1st, \$5.50 2nd. At the barn in Ryegate. Steve or Jamie 802-584-4450 (5)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

First Cut wrapped round bales, processed. Great heifer or beef hay. Analysis available upon request. Huntington VT Call or text Tim: 802-363-9770 \$45 loaded (6)

June cut Hay, Never wet, Will Load, 4' X 4' Round Bales, \$45/bale, quantity discount/ cash prices available. Westford, 802-355-2930 (10)

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

200 tons certified organic corn silage stored in an ag bag. Will load for you. 180 wrapped 4x4 certified organic round bales 18% protein, price negotiable. Highgate Center, VT 802-868-7535 If no answer, please leave a message. (9)

Certified organic wrapped round bales. The hay is dry, or close to dry. We have forage sample results if interested. Trucking can be arranged. \$45-55/bale depending on which hay is taken. 802-752-5669 (9)

ORANGE COUNTY

Large square bales. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting plus mulch bales. Wrapped and dry. 1000+ available. Some round bales available too. 802-236-7741 or csfarm1@gmail.com (10)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Excellent Quality. First, second, and third cut wrapped round bales. Dry. Perfect for horses, dairy, or goats. \$50/bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198. (3)

100+ 4x4 wrapped round bales \$50 each 802-793-3511 (10)

WINDSOR COUNTY

4 x 4 wrapped bales, 1st green \$45., dry \$55. 2nd green \$50., dry \$60. Royalton, 802-356-1402, royalvillagefarm@gmail.com (2)

Quality first cut wrapped round bales for sale \$40 each. 802-674-2417 (3)

Wanted

Co-producer wanted on an

organic livestock farm in Danville, Vt. Looking for someone interested in starting their own enterprise with the opportunity to market through our on farm store. Would barter/hire for assistance with ongoing operations. Currently have capacity to house extra cattle and would entertain other plant and animal production ideas as well. Check out Vt. Landlink listing for Lewis Creek Jerseys for more details. Email badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call Vince at 802-748-8461. (10)

JD 720 diesel with pony motor start. Looking for Serial # 7226525. Call or text 802-855-0446 (10)

Fahr KH-4S tedder for parts. Contact Dan @ 802-482-2047 (10)



 The University of Vermont
Engaging minds that change the world

Part-time Dairy Herd Assistant

Part-time assistant needed to help feed and supervise milking at the UVM Miller Farm. Expected to work up to 20 hrs per week. Requires experience milking cattle, operating feed mixers and tractors and preferable to have experience operating skid steers. Position would work alongside college students, so must be courteous and respectful. For more information, please contact Guy Roberts at guy.roberts@uvm.edu.

The University of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other category legally protected by federal or state law. The University encourages applications from all individuals who will contribute to the diversity and excellence of the institution.

Janet Currie*continued from page 1*

While undertaking this market research, Janet discovered other farmers looking for processors and processors looking for crops.

Spotting the need for brokerage services, Janet started her biomass business in 2020 working with two other women, one based in Chicago and the other in Oregon. Both helped expand Janet's network to include many large farms in the West as well as bringing an export license for overseas sales to her business. Janet's business has grown to include large transactions between buyers and sellers from different states. For example, one sale was based on Janet brokering 225,000 lbs of biomass from a Colorado grower to sell to a processor in Tennessee. Since 2020, Janet has brokered over a 1.5 million pounds of biomass. Building on that success, Janet is starting an auction house.

Janet's business niche is being quick at honing in on a sales price which works for

both parties. As she says, "I find out what a farmer wants, what a processor wants; it's a little bit of a dance as the processor wants to buy low and the farmer wants to sell high. She knows the needs of processors, for example, some want the hemp milled, others don't. Some need expedited shipping and others can wait. The art and science of brokerage is matching the need of growers and processors.

This past year, 2022, Janet was ready to diversify her business. She has since registered to grow fiber.

Growing Hemp for Fiber

Janet heard Travis Samuels talking about his new Vermont-based business Zion Growers on a recorded webinar. This piqued her interest in growing hemp for fiber. She heard how industrial hemp varieties grown for fiber could be part of a value-added chain for many innovative products and how hemp farmers could benefit from selling or partnering with a processor which has business plan for growth.

As Janet said, "In the beginning of May 2022, I really wanted to get some seeds, but this spring was a little tricky. I didn't know whether we'd get a late frost like 2019 which was a nightmare. It was really warm in May, but June was cold. We were worried we would have another 2019 season."

Janet waited to see what the weather forecast would be for a planting window. When the forecast looked good, she said, "I met Travis on Friday, picked up five bags containing 50,000 seeds per bag from him, and got the seeds in the ground on Monday."

Aware of nearby hemp farmers growing flowers for CBD, Janet identified a site with a 10-mile radius to buffer any possibility that her plants could pollinate female hemp plants which reduces the amount of CBD produced. Not only the location, but the timing is critical as hemp varieties grown for fiber will typically flower before other hemp plants grown for CBD.

Far enough from farms growing for CBD including her own farm property in Orwell, Janet partnered with her friend Jeff Sheldon, who had hundreds of acres of corn fields in Fairhaven. He was happy to lease five acres to try a new hemp variety grown for fiber.

Harvest day at the Fairhaven field in August drew an interested crowd including Lyle Jepton, the executive director of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region, Mike DiTomasso, Hemp Program Inspector with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and Suzy Hodgson, Sustainable Agriculture,

*continued on page 13***Agency Contact Numbers**

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide ..	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Produce Program	802-522-7811
VT Agriculture & Environmental Lab ...	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands	802-917-2637

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

Hemp Fiber Field Facts

- Location – Airport Road, Fairhaven, VT
- Size – 5 acres
- Soil type – clay
- Prepped for corn and previous crop – corn
- Seeded with no-till drill at on May 23, 2022
- Plants flowered by July 25.
- 2022 growing season in Rutland County– abnormally dry
- Harvest Date: August 10, 2022. (90 days after planting)
- Plant Height: 100 to 165 cm
- Stem Diameter: 0.4 to 0.7 cm
- 7 bales of biomass (800 lbs per bale) harvested
- Processing planned with Zion Growers in Vermont Marble Museum building, 52 Main Street in Proctor.

Note: The typical seeding rate used by hemp fiber growers is between 40 and 60 lbs ac-1. See UVM Extension trials at uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops/research

Janet Currie*continued from page 12*

University of Vermont Extension. Suzy commented, “We could see the potential of economic development in industrial hemp and its many value-added products and services.” A hemp crop can potentially bring in more revenue than corn and doesn’t require much more in time and costs in terms of equipment or management practices. Mike added, “I am hopeful that fiber hemp will be a valuable rotational crop in Vermont and see the potential in incorporating hemp as a way to diversify revenue streams and to build soil health for farmers across Vermont.”

Suzy asked Janet about what she’d learned over this past summer. Trying a new crop in a new marketplace, Janet has built up her knowledge and skills by networking and attending UVM Extension’s Northwest Crops & Soils Field Day at Border View Farm. Janet said,

“I had opportunity to network, see hands-on work with hemp, and talk to individuals who were well-versed in genetic strains. I saw the exhibit on hempcrete. I learned from books, but seeing applied research on the farm was perfect for me. And Vermont’s Secretary of Agriculture, Food, and Markets sat next to me at lunch. His being there tells me that there’s a high level of interest in what we’re trying to accomplish.”

Janet’s Advice – From One Farmer to Another when Growing Hemp for Fiber or Grain

People growing hemp are on the learning curve. Janet tells me, “Farmers need to have better understanding of

A COA is a Certificate of Analysis from a certified laboratory which details the chemical analysis of a hemp harvest lot.

what growing hemp requires. I’ve met farmers who don’t know what a COA is and that they need one.”

- Don’t put plants in ground that you don’t have a buyer for.
- Time your planting based on the variety and type of hemp you want to grow.
- Do soil tests. See UVM soil testing lab and contact.
- Irrigation may not be necessary. “We don’t have drip tape and didn’t rely on irrigation.”
- Growing on clay can work when an area with moisture is identified. “We found plants grow on clay when there are pockets which can help when weather’s dry.”
- Cutting with disc mower works well.
- Do not plant more than you can dry and store.

For hemp fiber variety trials and results, check out UVM Extension Northwest Crops & Soils Program, 2021 Industrial Hemp Fiber Variety Trial.

Janet and Travis are looking forward to 2023 for the hemp fiber business and new opportunities. As Janet tells me, “I want other farms to see this crop. It looks like it’s working, so we’re going to plant 400 acres next year.”

The end of 2022 marks a new phase for Vermont hemp production. In January 1, 2023, farmers who wish to cultivate hemp and operate in compliance with federal law will be required to have a license issued under

the U. S. Domestic Hemp Production Program. Given weather impacts, regulatory

changes and marketing challenges, Janet reflected, “Well, it’s been bumpy ride,

it’s been a dirt road for a while, let’s make the ride smoother.”

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round**Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program**

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley

Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov

802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour

Mary.Montour@vermont.gov

802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett

Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov

802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos

Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov

802-461-3814

Phil Wilson

Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov

802-505-5378

November**Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Grants and Operational Stipends**

Grants for 20-year capital improvements & operational stipends for fairs and field days.

Drew Watson

Andrew.Watson@vermont.gov

802-636-7793

November/December**Working Lands ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Impact Grant**

Grants available for primary agricultural and forestry producers.

Clare Salerno

Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov

802-917-2637

Members the Food Safety Consumer Protection Division outside VTC campus in Randolph Center. Back Row: Mike LeRose, Zach Bartlett, Sumner Kuehne, Andrew Seward, Ryan Lockwood, Daryl Kuehne. Second

row from back: Tucker Diego, Steve Volk, Matt MacLean, Dwight Brunnette, Marc Paquette, Jim Cameron, Scott Dolan, Kristin Haas, Deb Durkee-Burnette, Chantal Deojay, Briton Laslow, Kathy McNamara. Front Row: E.B. Flory, Alma Greene, Julie Boisvert, Ashley Fitzgerald.



Pasture and Surface Water Fencing Grant Program – Start Planning for Your Next Grazing Season!

By Mary Montour, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

As your grazing season comes to a close this fall, this is a great time to take inventory of your pasture health, livestock grazing system, what worked well, what didn't work well, and explore grant funding opportunities to enhance your grazing system for next season!

The Agency's Pasture and Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Grant Program provides pasture management technical assistance and financial assistance to Vermont farmers. Projects that include the exclusion and protection of surface



Polywire installation creating multiple paddocks to enhance a rotational grazing system.

water are the main focus of the PSWF Program, but the program can help eligible operations start or improve their rotational grazing practices even if there isn't directly an adjacent surface

water. Grants typically can reimburse up to 90% of eligible project costs up to \$10,000 for projects that do not include fencing livestock out of surface water and up to \$15,000 for projects

that do include fencing out of surface waters. Eligible practices include fencing, watering facilities, watering pipelines, electric fence chargers, stream crossings, lane-ways, labor or contracting costs to install the practices and more.

To be eligible, you must be a farm required to comply with the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) and have ownership, lease, or management control of the project land for 10 years. Priority is given to farms that have at least four acres for the raising, feeding and management of at least five cattle or cows, 15 goats or sheep, four equine, or three camelids and where projects will provide a water

quality benefit.

Learn more about the PSWF by visiting our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/pswf> or contacting Mary Montour by email Mary.Montour@vermont.gov or by phone 802-461-6087.

Additionally, the fall months are the time to start planning next year's projects to apply for grant funding opportunities through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Program. Learn more about technical and financial assistance available to grazing farmers on the USDA NRCS VT website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/vt/programs/>. Act now – NRCS deadlines are coming up!

Vermont Farm to Plate On-Farm Food Scrap Composting Guide

By Kelly Dolan, Farm to Plate Network Manager, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Are you interested in learning more about on-farm food scrap composting? For any farmer, there are many considerations when exploring a new project including cost, regulations, and how any changes fit into their farm's current practices. Recognizing both

the benefits and challenges of navigating this process, Farm to Plate's Food Cycle Community of Practice has developed a new resource for farmers looking to expand on-farm food scrap composting in collaboration with their local community. This guide aims to clarify the regulatory landscape for both organic and conventional farms and lays out potential options for community-oriented solutions to close regional

gaps in the composting infrastructure currently available in Vermont. It also aims to encourage connections between small farms and composting entrepreneurs to residents, schools, food shelves, grocery stores, restaurants, and other organizations to manage food scraps and nutrients locally.

Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) came into full effect in July 2020, effectively banning

food scraps from the landfill. Food scraps are among the few materials that can be "recycled" locally, thereby maintaining this valuable resource within a community and for community use. Partnerships between farms and local businesses, schools and individuals provides benefits at both ends; farmers can improve their soil quality and the community can safely and legally dispose of food waste. Successful composting partnerships require both education and oversight as Black Dirt Farm describes: "We see these challenges as an

continued on page 15



Farm to Plate's Food Cycle Community of Practice just released a new composting guide to help farmers looking to expand on-farm composting in collaboration with their local community.

Getting to Know the Vermont Produce Program

By Kim Burns & Kristina Sweet, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Produce Program works with fruit and vegetable farms to enhance produce safety and promote public health. Our vision is a safe, local, and thriving Vermont produce industry.

In short, produce safety means preventing produce from being contaminated with pathogens—bacteria, viruses, and parasites—that can make people sick. But improving your on-farm produce safety practices can also lead to increased efficiency, staff satisfaction, and new market access. We work with University of Vermont Extension produce safety experts to make sure all Vermont growers have the resources and technical assistance they need to grow produce safety on their farms. Have a question about produce safety? Let us know at AGR.Produce@vermont.gov or 802-461-6152.

We recently reorganized our webpages to best serve Vermont growers and help you understand key requirements under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). Stay tuned for more information about a new grant opportunity for produce safety improvements coming later this fall!

The Produce Safety Rule

The PSR (21 CFR Part 112) is the federal food safe-

ty standard for farms that grow, harvest, pack, or hold produce. The PSR establishes minimum science-based standards to prevent microbial contamination of fresh produce and reduce foodborne illness outbreaks. Produce farms are covered by the rule, qualify for an exemption, or are excluded from compliance.

Covered Produce Farms

A covered produce farm is a farm subject to the requirements of the PSR. In Vermont, covered produce farms undergo routine inspections conducted by an Agency of Agriculture produce safety specialist.

Exempt Produce Farms

A produce farm is eligible for a qualified exemption under the Produce Safety Rule when:

- The farm's average annual food sales over the past 3 years are less than \$500,000. (Adjusted for inflation, the average 3 year value for 2019–2021 is \$584,908.)

and

- More than 50% of the farm's average annual food sales over the past 3 years were to qualified end-users, which include the consumer of the food OR a retail food establishment, such as a restaurant or grocery store, located in Vermont or within 275 miles of the farm.

Qualified Exempt farms must meet recordkeeping and labeling requirements

to maintain the exemption. Find the Qualified Exemption Self-Certification Form on our website at agriculture.vermont.gov/food-safety/produce-program/exempt-produce-farms.

Excluded Produce Farms

Farms that meet one of the following criteria are excluded and are not required to meet Produce Safety Rule requirements or undergo farm inspections.

- Farms with less than \$25,000 in average annual produce sales over the past 3 years. (Adjusted for inflation, the average 3 year value for 2019–2021 is \$29,245.)
- Farms that grow produce only for personal consumption.
- Farms that only grow produce that FDA considers "rarely consumed raw."

Next Steps

The Produce Program is committed to assisting Vermont farms with the educational and technical resources they need to comply with the Produce Safety Rule, and we are continually updating resources for growers. Visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produce to determine your farm's coverage. You can also contact the Produce Program team with questions. Contact Tucker Diego at 802-622-4412 or tucker.diego@vermont.gov or Kim Burns at 802-461-6152 or kim.burns@vermont.gov.

National Agricultural Statistics Service Census Coming Soon

By USDA NASS

The Census of Agriculture provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation. Through the Census of Agriculture, producers can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and can influence decisions that will shape the future of U.S. agriculture.

Census of Agriculture data are used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities — federal, state, and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations, and many others.

- Farmers and ranchers can use Census of Agriculture data to make informed decisions about the future of their own operations.
- Companies and cooperatives use the data to determine where to locate facilities that will serve agricultural producers.
- Community planners use the information to target needed services to rural residents.
- Legislators use census data when shaping farm policies and programs.

NASS is bound by law (Title 7, U.S. Code, and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act or CIPSEA, Public Law 107-347) – and pledges to every data provider – to use the information for statistical purposes only. NASS publishes only aggregated data, not individual or farm-specific data.

For more information go to <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/index.php>

Composting Guide

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exciting opportunity to build greater literacy across our community about how to steward resources and organize ourselves in more effective community-scale systems."

In addition to regulatory information, this resource guides farmers through:

1. composting budget and business plans;
2. different composting systems; and
3. connecting with the community through education and outreach.

Find details and the guide on the Vermont Food Cycle website! Learn more at <https://vtfoodcycle.com/farms>.

The Big E – It's a Wrap

By Kristen Brassard, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Sunday, October 2nd, brought to a close the 2022 Eastern States Exposition, better known as The Big E.

This year brought a return to pre-pandemic activity across the fairgrounds and in the Vermont Building. Total attendance at the Big E this year reached 1,603,354 visitors, second only to 2019.

"Our Vermont businesses once again demonstrated for visitors to the Vermont Building why our state is a special place with much to experience," Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts said. "From world class products to world class food and beverages our Green Mountain companies stand ready to welcome visitors year-round!"

Vendors at the Vermont Building this year spoke

enthusiastically about the experience this year:

- **Denise Monte, Village Peddler:** "An amazing successful 17 days not only selling our homemade caramel apples and fudge but also being able to be part of showcasing the best of Vermont."
- **Jeffrey Chevalier, Better Wheel Workshops:** "The Vermont building embodied the Vermont motto of Freedom and Unity to a T this year. We all had our own unique endeavors to undertake, but I felt we all had each other's backs and as someone who mostly worked the show alone, it made all the difference in the world. It was an honor and a privilege to get the opportunity to share my craft with so many, and

to work alongside such fantastic people. I am already looking forward to next year."

- **Eleanor Leger, Eden Icer Ciders:** "We love exhibiting at the Vermont Building. We get to meet so many great people from around New England and introduce them to great ciders and especially ice ciders. This year our cider sales were the equivalent of selling over 11,000 pounds of Vermont apples!"

For more information about the Big E visit: <https://www.thebige.com/>

Businesses interested in vending in the Vermont Building at the 2023 Big E should contact:

Kristen Brassard by email at Kristen.Brassard@vermont.gov or by phone at 802-522-3742.



Gov. Phil Scott with Logan George (left), Maintenance and Services staff for the Vermont Building. Logan received the Big E "Host of the Day" award, which recognizes a person who goes "above and beyond" to make the fair a positive experience for everyone.



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